

Grace and Felicity, both 18 from Wellington. Went to Queen Margaret's Private Girls College, now in first year Vic Uni.

What kinds of films do you like watching?

"Rom-coms". Both agreed that they did not see the 50 Shades movies as a rom-com.

Have you or your friends/family seen the 50 Shades film(s) before? Did you friends/family like it?

"More of our friends had read the books" ---This would have been in year 10, girls

"We would have silent reading [at school] and she [friend] would put a different book cover on the back"

Yes at age 16 when it came out (both). Watched it because of the hype. Sought it out on pirate site.

Felicity got bored and didn't watch till end.

It was talked about but more as a joke in peer groups.

G's 16yo sister seen it. "Me, mum and my sister talk about it now as a joke"

Was the film/series/books talked about at school?

"We talked about it as a joke" – At school with friends

"Yeah I reckon all of them" ---have all your friends seen them

How did you feel when you saw the film? Shocked? Bored? Curious? Wish you hadn't seen it? Nothing?

Did you like it?

"I turned it off because I got bored" – F watched it when she was 14

"I was pretty shocked" – G, watched it in the last two years

Both girls thought that the "Storyline seems so unrealistic" – This was an overview of the whole film.

F: The acting and cinematography was cringe

Why did you watch it?

"It was just really hyped and I watched it online" – It was hyped up by social media and the internet but not so much in schools.

What did you think of Anastasia and Christian's relationship? (prompts: was it healthy? Realistic?)

"It all seemed really forced" –This was referring the relationship not being realistic and the actually plot did not flow.

"Cinematography and acting was not good"

"I can't see that happening in any relationship"

"Based on what she signed up for and he didn't want to change his ways is a good indicator [of the relationship not being healthy]"

"I don't really like how she can't touch him"

"He had all of the power"

"She did not get much say, always on his terms"

G: So weird, it was really forced

Abnormal. Unhealthy. "She didn't know what she was signing up for"

"She can't touch him, he has the power. She has no real say" (but acknowledged she negotiated the contract)

Not an abusive relationship –but the last scene, yes. She knew what she was getting into. She could stop if she wanted (contradictory to comment below)

What did you think about the sex scenes?

"Slightly stronger than normal"

"Angles and lighting was more intense [than other Hollywood sex scenes]"

"The fact that she was a virgin, given her a certain perspective of what sex was, it could have given her quite the wrong impression of sex" ---the sex scenes could have negatively impacted Anastasia and also set an unrealistic expectation for other virgins

Shocked by the nudity at the start, but not shocked by the end

Did you find the sex scenes very 'strong'? Or were they not so bad?

Both girls found the sex scenes not so bad until the last punishing scene

"I hate that scene...he completely ruins it, ruins trust". **Felt uncomfortable watching it.**

"he should have double checked during" meaning that Christian should have checked to see if Anastasia was okay but instead he punished her, she cried and then she left him.

"I reckon in the last scene, yes" ---it is an abusive relationship

"I can't see it being something that was mutual" – referring to Christian at 15 and his relationship with his mums friend.

Grace said at 16 she was shocked by the sex scenes, didn't know what she was in for.

Do you know what BDSM is? Is it talked about at school or in sex ed? Have you seen this sort of stuff in films/TV shows before?

Didn't really know about BDSM until these films came out

"Not at all...BDSM wasn't something that we touched on" ---- the girls said that when they were going through sex ed in school they were not yet exposed to what BDSM was. They were advocates for how their sex-ed was structured and love the "as-it-basket" process was implemented. They stated that if they were aware of BDSM perhaps someone would have asked a question about it and it would have become a topic of discussion.

"Nowadays 16 year olds are a lot more exposed to it [BDSM]" --- This is not the age that young people go through sex-ed

"No one would really know about that stuff"- when they are doing sex-ed

Sex was very much talked about at their school – not personal experiences "but we're open at school, most people wouldn't be". **BDSM was joked about and considered unrealistic. "Our friends wouldn't do that"**

Did you notice the themes of consent and using protection?

"It was continued throughout" –They sometimes felt it was placed in scenes on purpose and didn't quite flow. Sometimes it flowed a bit better

"He made it quite obvious" ---Christian displaying the condom

"Hopefully if she really didn't want to she wouldn't" --- refers to taking the pill and how he made it a rule that she had to be on it.

Found the condom use humorous. Consent yes. Good that consent was addressed as it usually isn't.

Classification and 'harms'

Do you think the film needs age-restricting? To what age?

"I feel like from our perspective making it R16 it would be fine from our backgrounds"

"If you were someone who had no experience it would be different" –The girls however did state that talking about sex is becoming more and more common and they started talking about sex from the age of 13-14.

They also stated that "a lot more exposure to the themes now" meaning that sex and BDSM is talked about and can be seen a lot more on the internet, social media, porn etc and it is not as taboo

G: "R16 is fine, for our background, but if you've never had any experience..." Concerned for 'innocent' 16yo's, but so long as teens are comfortable talking about the issues with their parents, it's OK at 16. "At 16 you can make judgement for yourself"

"<18 you'd only access if you knew about the films already. We're more exposed to stuff now"

How might the depictions of sex be 'harmful' to younger people? (eg shock them, send unrealistic/ expectations about sex etc)

The girls were initially quite sceptical about the depictions actually causing harm due to:

"We are pretty exposed to sex on the screen"

"Sex is definitely talked about a lot at High school"

But then they said that it is "dependent on your friend group" and "the majority of our year group would not have talked about sex."

"Most of the guys I know joke about it" – Their friends who are boys said that they didn't like the movies but had all seen them and knew all about them.

Problematic for 'very young' people to be exposed

Or were there positive messages about sex and relationships that teenagers would understand?

"Notion of consent was good"

"He made an effort to make sure that it was mutual [agreement]"

"Her flat mate, Kate's, relationship is compared which is good" --- The girls liked how in the first movie normal relationship was depicted and not just Christian and Anastasia. They appreciated seeing the connection between Kate and Christian's brother and noted how they found that normal and not Christian and Anastasia's relationship. "Kate and Elliot are a lot more connected"

"There is no PDA [between Christian and Anastasia]"

Consent 'grey' but the notion of consent and protection – he made the effort

(depending on their answer) The film is currently R18. Is the sexual content too much for 16 year-olds or will they be able to handle it?

"I thought nothing much at all, I wasn't scarred or anything by it" (which contradicts earlier comment that she was shocked by the sex scenes, didn't know what she was in for)

"Keeping it R18 wouldn't be a bad decision because those people who are interested could go and watch it [online]"

Both girls specified how important parent communication is. They both appreciate being able to talk about the movies with the mothers and found that their mothers repeatedly said how unrealistic the movie was. They were concerned with families who would avoid talking about it. "You know that's not real" ----What a mum said to one of the girls.

"You can make that judgement at 16" – both girls agreed that you can make judgments about what you want to watch at 16. They said that they feel comfortable saying no to watching certain movies. They also said that they didn't think it would be a movie that would be watched with a group of people, where peer pressure could occur.

"Now (in 2018) OK to change it to 16, but back then (2015 when film came out) would have made it R18" – They said that if the movies were released now the shock factor would have been minimised as people are now more open to discussing sex and BDSM. When the movie first came out there was nothing else like them to compare them to and the shock of the content that went against normal Hollywood depicted sex scenes would have made it more viable to be considered R18.

'Today's teens are a lot more exposed to sexual material'

'Not confronting if you've seen it before.'

General re YP consults

Why do you think it's important we talk to young people about film classification?

Both agreed that it was very important and they had a lot of fun

Would you like to receive feedback on the decision that we come to?

Both would like to receive an email of the report- Kim has emails